

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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R 161500Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0215
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN POUCH
AMCONSUL DURBAN POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 0278

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: EFIS, SF
SUBJECT: SOVIET ANTARCTIC FISHING

REF: STATE 304164

SUMMARY: EMBASSY AND CONGEN CAPE TOWN HAVE BEEN ABLE TO
GENERATE ONLY LIMITED INFORMATION FROM SAG SOURCES ON
SOVIET ANTARCTICA FISHING. WHAT INFORMATION DID EMERGE
INDICATED ACTIVE SOVIET INTEREST IN KRILL FISHING IN AREA
BUT ACTUAL LEVELS OF ACTIVITY COULD NOT BE QUANTIFIED.
END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED MATTER WITH DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT
OF INDUSTRIES FISHERIES OFFICE IN PRETORIA, P.R.
KRUGER, WHO PROVIDED FOLLOWING DATA. THREE SOVIET
FISHING RESEARCH VESSELS PASSED THROUGH CAPE TOWN IN
FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1977 ENROUTE HOME FROM ANTARCTIC
WATERS. VESSELS CARRIED TRAWLING GEAR (MID-WATER TYPE)
AND APPEARED TO HAVE MADE SMALL EXPERIMENTAL CATCHES OF
KRILL. SAG HAS HEARD REPORTS IN LATTER PART OF 1977
THAT THREE OTHER SOVIET COMMERCIAL TRAWLERS WERE
OPERATING IN ANTARCTIC WATERS CATCHING KRILL, BUT
THESE SHIPS HAVE NOT PASSED THROUGH CAPE TOWN SO SAG
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HAS NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS. ACCORDING TO A RUMOR
CIRCULATING IN SOUTH AFRICAN FISHING CIRCLES, SOME OF
SOVIET SHIPS WHICH WERE FORCED TO LEAVE SOUTH AFRICAN
WATERS WHEN SAG 200 MILE FISHING LIMIT WENT INTO
EFFECT NOVEMBER 1, HAVE GONE TO ANTARCTIC. AGAIN
SAG HAS NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS.

2. KRUGER STATED THAT SOUTH AFRICAN FISHING BOATS ARE NOT CURRENTLY OPERATING IN ANTARCTIC BUT SOUTH AFRICA IS VERY INTERESTED IN POTENTIAL OF AREA. SAG IS SENDING FISHERIES RESEARCH VESSEL TO ANTARCTIC WATERS IN EARLY FEBRUARY TO INVESTIGATE ACTUAL FISHING POTENTIAL, PARTICULARLY FOR KRILL. KRUGER STATED THAT FISHERIES OFFICE BELIEVES SOUTH AFRICAN VERSION OF PURSE SEINE METHOD PARTICULARLY SUITABLE TO KRILL AND SUPERIOR TO MID-WATER TRAWL METHOD WHICH SOVIETS ARE USING. KRUGER STATED SOVIETS HAD MADE INDIRECT APPROACHES TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON SOUTH AFRICAN METHOD BUT WERE REBUFFED.

3. CONGEN CAPE TOWN APPROACHED DIVISION OF SEA FISHERIES HEADQUARTERS IN CAPE TOWN AND DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH ASSISTANT DIRECTOR NEWMAN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANTARCTICA FISHING MATTERS. NEWMAN WAS MORE RETICENT THAN KRUGER AND STATED ONLY INFORMATION HE HAD WAS PUBLISHED REPORTS WHICH HE ASSUMED WASHINGTON HAD ALSO. HE SPECIFICALLY CITED THREE PUBLICATIONS PUT OUT IN 1977 BY FAO UNDER AUSPICES OF ITS SOUTHERN OCEANS FISHERIES SURVEY. THESE INCLUDE "LIVING RESOURCES OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN" AND "UTILIZATION OF KRILL". BOWDLER

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